



Connecticut Students for a Dream

*Empower. Educate. Advocate.*

[www.CT4aDream.org](http://www.CT4aDream.org)

**Testimony to the Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly**

March 1, 2023

**Testimony Regarding SB 1095: “An Act Concerning School Resource Officers”**

Dear Members and Honorable Chairs of the Education Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

We, Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D), stand in support of SB 1095: “An Act Concerning School Resource Officers”

C4D is a statewide, youth-led network that fights for the rights of undocumented immigrant youth and their families. We do this through community organizing, leadership development, and advocacy. We are proud to be the only organization in Connecticut that is led by and for immigrant youth directly impacted by the issues we seek to address. Our membership is composed of undocumented immigrant youth ages 13-24 throughout the state of Connecticut.

CT Students for a Dream and our membership supports SB 1095: passing this bill is the right thing to do as all students deserve to feel safe, secure, and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources.

We especially want to highlight that many of our members are in high school, some of whom are speaking today. They are often in schools that are understaffed, underfunded, but over policed. They are over policed by way of school resource officers, officers stationed outside the school, increased surveillance, and metal detectors. These additions to the school environment make school feel less like a place for learning and more like a prison.

We understand that many see the hardening of schools as the only response, however, after years and years of increasingly punitive policies that primarily affect black and brown students, we have to ask ourselves if we made the right choices along the way. We have seen the effects of the reliance on police officers in various cities in CT, where some of the least funded schools have the highest numbers of police referrals. Danbury, Waterbury, and New Britain to name a few. These arrests, or police referrals could lead to expulsions, suspensions, and lifelong negative impacts to students' future employment and education. Immigrant students also face an extra layer of danger when the actions of school resource officers could put their immigration status in jeopardy.

We have also seen some school districts step AWAY from policing and towards resolving the underlying causes of these police referrals all to great results! We are calling on the CT General Assembly to continue moving in the right direction, to provide needed resources and funding to schools and to step away from policing as the answer. Policing disproportionately affects black students, brown students, and students with disabilities.

C4D and our membership views this bill as an essential step in ensuring that all CT's immigrants can have access to an education while feeling safe. We strongly stand in support of SB 1095 and urge the Committee

to vote favorably and ensure that this legislation becomes reality.

On behalf of the C4D Community,

Camila Bortolletto & Anghy Idrovo

Co-Executive Directors

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